

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4328,
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

HON. MARSHALL "MARK" SANFORD

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 20, 1998

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill for a number of different reasons. Fundamentally, I rise because this Omnibus Bill validates the idea that we are running surpluses in Washington, when in fact, by any normal accounting standards, we are not. This year we will borrow \$100 billion from the Social Security Trust Fund that will, in turn, yield what Washington calls a surplus. This bill will take \$20 billion, one-third of that "protected surplus" and spend it, and yet doing so would break the President's commitment to saving every dime of the surplus for Social Security. If Congress is unwilling to pass the tax cut, and I took the President at his word because we want to save this so-called surplus for Social Security, how can we possibly take that money and spend it? I do not think we can and that is fundamentally why we should vote against this bill.

It, as well, establishes a horrible precedence of going over budget. When people back home write an overdraft on their checking account, they have to pay the finance costs. They are normal repercussions for families or businesses when they exceed a budget, and yet Congress just creates a new category called Emergency Spending and says, "Oops," and moves on. \$20 billion is hardly an "oops" by the definition passed to me from people along the coast of South Carolina. Even what has been thrown into this emergency category is a stretch by any imagination. The Inman Report, in 1985, listed 126 embassy facilities that should be improved to thwart attack. Forty buildings were improved upon, the rest were left as they are. While the attacks this year in Africa were tragic, they were hardly an emergency in that the possibility has been talked about for over 13 years. Similarly, the Y2K problem, of which billions are in this bill, is certainly a great problem, but not an emergency. CONNIE MORELLA and STEPHEN HORN have held numerous hearings on the Y2K problem facing this Nation. There are other examples like that, and in fact, within the embassy section \$100 million is there for a Capitol Hill Visitor Center. The Capitol Hill Visitors Center has been the subject of much debate over the last 2 years. How a topic of conversation for 10 years becomes an emergency, I do not quite understand.

Finally, this bill offers sham offsets and sham reforms that I do not think pass the litmus test of common sense. The offsets are peculiar. For instance, in this bill, the Federal Government takes over the pension fund liabilities of the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia now invests in conventional investments like stock and bonds, and will take those assets, sell them in the marketplace and use that money to pay for current spending and call that an offset. Meanwhile, we ignore the fact that the pension one day will have to be paid as people retire. That is not really an offset, that is picking up a liability and yet we call it "offset" in this bill.

Similarly with the IMF, while it has a real expenditure of \$18 billion, which I think is basically disguised foreign aid, its reforms are no more than fig leaves in substance. We had a very small amendment that would simply list IMF expenditure like every other expenditure in the Federal Government. My own leadership, for some odd reason, yielded to the views of the Executive Branch and prevented this reform. I think it makes sense because right now if the Federal Government buys 100 thousand acres of land in Wyoming or buys a new Federal building, it is viewed as an expense. However, if we invest \$18 billion in the IMF, it is viewed as picking up an asset as we pick up the drawing rights. Most people I know would much rather have as collateral 100 thousand acres in Wyoming or the Federal building in Georgia than drawing rights for a loan made to the Soviet Union. In fact, the last \$4 billion the IMF sent to the Soviet Union, by all accounts, has been squandered. There are other reasons this bill does not make a lot of sense. Particularly, the fact that we are not seeing what we are voting on. The idea of voting for something you can't see is, I think, a particular disservice to your constituents that you represent in Washington and I think it is a gross act of mismanagement to fund a third of all government spending in a process that is jammed into a 2 or 3 week time frame. I don't know of any businesses that could survive if they operated in this fashion.

For these reasons, it's validating a surplus when we do not have one, setting a precedent of going over budget, incorrectly defining non-emergency spending as emergency, and its sham offsets say to me that a "no" vote is a vote that makes common sense. It is also one that does not rob from the Social Security Trust Fund, which I thought was something that the Democrats and the President were serious about.

IN MEMORY OF EBEN TISDALE

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today before the House to celebrate the life of a most distinguished citizen and incomparable professional, Eben Tisdale, who passed away on October 18, 1998.

Eben Tisdale was the dean of high technology advocates in Washington, D.C. He served as Hewlett Packard Company's Government Relations Director in Washington, D.C. since 1984, and is credited with giving the industry a needed daily presence on Capitol Hill. Tisdale joined Hewlett Packard following five years as Vice President of the Scientific Apparatus Makers Association in Washington, D.C.

In the 1970's, Eben helped create the Semiconductor Industry Association and the Electronics Association of California. He is also credited with convincing the high technology industry that it needed to establish a strong presence in Washington, D.C.

Eben Tisdale was a mentor for countless individuals associated with high technology issues in Washington, D.C. today. Eben was in a class by himself—a top professional, an excellent strategist, a loyal friend and a first-

rate human being. He is survived by his wife Ann, a son Anthony and a daughter Jessica.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in expressing condolences to Eben Tisdale's family, and to commemorate his extraordinary service and contributions to the well being of our nation.

GEORGE SOROS DISCUSSES THE
INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM
AT BANKING COMMITTEE
HEARING—U.S. ACTION AND ASSISTANCE IS ESSENTIAL

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 21, 1998

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, last night this House approved the Omnibus Appropriations Act which included funding for the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Earlier this month, the IMF and the World Bank held their annual meetings here in Washington, D.C., against a backdrop of international financial turmoil and serious concern about the economies of a number of key countries in the world and about the ability of the international financial system to deal with the crisis. The IMF has not been successful in resolving the economic problems in East Asia and in Russia thus far.

Just a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, George Soros, the international financial genius, appeared before the House Banking Committee to issue a somber warning to the Congress of the United States—Unless Congress is willing to support the IMF and take supportive action in dealing with the faltering international financial system, the disintegration of the global capitalist system will have dire consequences for the United States economy because we are at the center of that system. We cannot by and do nothing while other countries face economic crisis.

The instability and enormous losses that have been suffered on Wall Street in the past few weeks are just the latest indications of the scope and gravity of this crisis. While this initial impact upon our own country has been limited so far to our financial markets, the consequences of further deterioration would be felt throughout our economy with consequences that would be felt by all Americans.

Mr. Speaker, George Soros told the Banking Committee that the Congress has an extraordinary responsibility and obligation to assure the success and the continued viability of the IMF and the international financial system. Mr. Soros also told the Committee that "I am convinced that the attitude of the Congress was already an important element in the failure to deal with Russia" with all of the serious consequences that could bring.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that there was destructive dithering and dallying on the part of the leadership of the Congress earlier this year, but I welcome the fact that the essential funding for the IMF was included in the Omnibus Appropriations legislation that we adopted last night. This important reversal in policy is in no small part due to the thoughtful and weighty arguments that George Soros advanced in testimony he presented at the Banking Committee hearing a few weeks ago.